



The LINK

for Child Care Professionals

Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

Fall 2004 / Winter 2005

DCCEL Wants to Hear Your Concerns

The Link spoke with Roger Long, DCCEL's new Administrator for Provider Relations and Licensing Operations. He's tasked with facilitating improved relationships between DCCEL staff and child care providers. One of the ways of improving communication is by providing a method to link provider's concerns back to the DCCEL office for resolution. Long has set up a toll-free number for providers to call.

The LINK: What is the new number?

Roger Long: The Division of Child Care and Early Learning's (DCCEL's) new child care toll-free provider number is 1.888.270.0614. This will be operational beginning December 1st.

The LINK: What's it for?

RL: In partnership with child care providers, DCCEL licensors help make sure children in licensed care receive child care that meets the state's minimum licensing requirements. But regulating the state's 8500 licensed centers and homes is a tough business, which sometimes can result in misunderstandings.

Although we always encourage you to work directly with your licensor or his or her supervisor, the toll-free number is available for you to call. Calls will always be referred back to the local level whenever possible – to the folks who know you and your situation the best.

The LINK: Why the new number?

RL: Parents already have a toll-free number to call when they have questions about a child care provider. DCCEL believes providers should also have a number to call when they have concerns about licensing practice.

The LINK: When should providers call?

RL: You can call DCCEL's new toll-free provider number when you have a specific question or concern about your DCCEL licensor's licensing practice. Please don't use this number if you have questions about Working Connections Child Care subsidies. Refer to the chart on Page 4 for the numbers to call in your area for subsidy questions.

The LINK: Are other languages supported?

RL: I speak Spanish pretty well so I encourage Spanish-speaking providers to call.

The LINK: Are there other ways for providers to find out information?

RL: DSHS is a large agency. DCCEL, which is part of DSHS, is much smaller. Still, sometimes trying to get the information you need about DCCEL and child care licensing policy isn't easy. And while we can help you if you have a general child care policy question, keep in mind almost all of DCCEL policy is online. Try checking the Internet or calling your licensor.

The LINK: What's the website address?

RL: DCCEL's main web address is <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/esa/dccel/>. To get to the "Providers" section, simply go to the main page and click the "Providers" button on the left-hand side.

Like our hardworking staff here at DCCEL, you do a vital job. Thank you for your sincere dedication to our great state's children and families. I look forward to working with you.



Let Us Know If You Want Us To Continue Mailing The LINK

You received the Spring/Summer and the Fall/Winter LINK newsletters by mail. It is expensive for DCCEL to mail this out to all providers and others. However, we will continue mailing these if the demand is great enough. Refer to the back of this issue to let us know your opinion.

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*Director's Corner***Olympia LINK***By Rachael Langen,
Director of the Division of
Child Care and Early Learning*

Strides In Child Care Licensing

The Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCEL), the state agency which resulted from the merging of child care policy and licensing, is now three years old! Clarity and consistency have been major themes for us as we continue to learn and grow as an organization. Since 70% of children in Washington spend part of their day in a child care setting, we believe clear child care licensing requirements and their consistent interpretation are fundamental to a quality licensing program. When

providers clearly understand the rules, following those rules is easier. Licensors also need to better understand the rules and their intent – plus the variety of ways a provider can meet the requirements.

The Division's emphasis has been in three areas:

Rewriting the Rules

The revision of the Child Care Center WAC (Washington Administrative Code) rules was completed in 2003. With help from center directors around the state, the Minimum Licensing Requirements are now easier to read and understand. They are written in a question and answer format and are more specific about what is required. The Family Home rules were rewritten this year in the same style and using the same process. The new version of this WAC was effective October 1, 2004.

Increasing Licensor Training

DCCEL has embarked on an intensive training program for licensors. Our current licensors are receiving additional

training while new licensors are now required to take 60 hours of training within the first 6 months of employment and receive an additional 30 hours of mentoring. This increased training will improve consistent rule interpretation among licensors and further strengthen job skills.

Revising the Licensing Methods and Practices (MAP) Manual

As we improve the clarity and consistent application of the child care rules, we want to be certain that each licensor follows the same licensing procedures. This ensures consistent rule enforcement and equitable treatment of providers, regardless of which licensor is involved. We are accomplishing this by updating and revising the MAP document that licensors use as a guide. This is being rewritten with heavy input from our licensors and is spearheaded by one of our licensing supervisors.

e-Child Care Update

By Mary Winkler, Project Business Analyst

You may recall that DCCEL began investigating whether it was possible to build a new computer application that would help the child care subsidy program and licensing case management. This application was dubbed e-Child Care and is chartered to evaluate, identify, select, and implement new subsidy payment technologies and provide a more efficient licensing sub-system.

The e-Child Care Project is alive and well and the project team is currently involved in the feasibility study. This is the "homework" that tells us whether developing a new child care services system is possible or necessary. This feasibility study will be presented to the state's oversight board in March of 2005 as part of the project's approval process.

How are the Key Stakeholders involved in the feasibility study?

Representatives from our providers and non-profit partners have been involved in focus group discussions and interviews conducted by the project team. This input has been collected and becomes part of the feasibility study that will be presented to the state's oversight board in March.

A fully operational e-Child Care system will solve the inherent problems with the child care subsidies authorization and payment system. The licensing subsystem of e-Child Care should also help licensors manage caseloads throughout the state.

For more detailed information on the project go to the DCCEL website at: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/esa/dccel/echildcare.shtml>.



Where is STARS Headed?

By Leslie Keller, STARS Program Manager

Over the last few years, significant progress has been made on the development and implementation of the STARS registry system. However, we continue to hear from providers, trainers and licensors that there are improvements that would make the Registry more user friendly.

DCCEL contracts with the Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC) to manage various aspects of the State Training and Registry System (STARS). WAEYC staff collect and enter training data, approve trainers, training, and training organizations, administer the scholarship program and provide funds to support early childhood conferences.

DCCEL in collaboration with WAEYC has enlisted the help of a

consultant to help identify opportunities for improvements in data entry, processing and reporting that will save time and effort for providers, trainers, licensors and WAEYC staff. Over the course of the next few months, consultants from Public Knowledge Inc. will be talking to providers, trainers, licensors, stakeholders and WAEYC staff to gain knowledge and understanding of many aspects of STARS and will make recommendations to DCCEL and WAEYC for future improvements to the Registry.

In another improvement effort, a STARS Training Concerns Process has been developed. STARS is committed to supporting quality training experiences. If you have a concern about a training offered to meet STARS training requirements or a trainer or organization approved to offer such trainings, please contact WAEYC and they will inform you about the process. Caterina Tassara-Vaubel is the STARS Manager at WAEYC and can be reached at 1-800-727-3107 Ext 33, or caterina@WAEYC.org. Caterina will promptly address your concerns.



Tribal Child Care Training

Denise Halloran, DCCEL Tribal Liaison



DCCEL's commitment to working closely with the Indian Nations to ensure quality child care was evident in the successful delivery of training to 66 tribal child care workers and 12 child care directors from 14 Indian Nations.

DCCEL Headquarters collaborated with Region X to conduct a needs assessment. All 29 federally recognized Indian Tribes in Washington responded to the survey, identified and prioritized their child care training needs, and identified barriers to

training. The top training priorities were basic STARS training and ten hours STARS-approved

continuing education. The primary barriers to attending other trainings were lack of cultural relevance, cost, and the difficulty of traveling to a central location.

DCCEL consulted with the tribes to identify culturally-sensitive trainers and accessible training locations, partnered with the Northwest Indian College and Spokane Tribal College to provide college credits, and contracted with WAEYC to organize training.

Basic STARS training was provided in Auburn, Bellingham, Olympia, Port Angeles, Spokane and Yakima. One leadership workshop for child care center directors was at Sea-Tac. Attending tribal care staff represented 14 Indian Tribes: Colville, Lower Elwah, Kalispel, Makah, Muckleshoot, Nooksack, Quileute, Quinault, Samish, Skokomish, Spokane,

Suquamish, Upper Skagit, and Yakama.

Feedback was very positive and participants' comments included appreciation for honoring different learning styles and "my culture." DCCEL is planning annual training opportunities for tribal child care professionals.

Center Licensing Guidebook

The Division is in the process of updating the Child Care Center Licensing Guidebook. Thank you to all of the Center Directors, staff, and others who recently attended forums around the state to give feedback. Around 100 people attended and provided lots of great ideas to incorporate into the Guidebook. Credit goes to Cheri Raff and the staff at Centralia College who developed the draft that was reviewed.

If you have questions about the Guidebook, call Liz Egge at 360-725-4681.

Table of Numbers for Child Care Provider Subsidy Inquires

General Areas	Subsidy Contact Number
Spokane North	877-210-5950
Spokane Valley	800-660-4370
Spokane South	800-962-5762
Colville/Republic/Newport	800-692-4128
Okanogan	800-692-4092
Clarkston/Colfax	509-751-4606
Wenatchee	800-692-4089
Moses Lake	509-764-5680
Yakima/Ellensburg/Walla Walla/Tri Cities	888-575-2088
Everett	425-339-4009
Smokey Point	360-651-5205
Skykomish Valley	360-794-1345
Alderwood/Lynnwood	425-673-3037
Mt. Vernon	360-416-7321
Bellingham	360-714-4108
Oak Harbor	360-240-4753
King County	800-337-1835
Pierce/Kitsap Counties	253-476-7308
Thurston	877-980-9180
Pacific/Grays Harbor/Mason/Lewis Counties	877-980-9180
Cowlitz/Clark/Skamania/Klickitat Counties	877-980-9180
Clallam and Jefferson Counties	877-980-9180

Providers can also call the Working Connections Information Phone at 1-866-218-3244 to get information about parent authorizations.

Tell Us What You Think

Should we continue to mail The LINK? If we get enough feedback that says you prefer it in hardcopy (versus online), we will continue mailing it.

It is expensive to mail this newsletter to all providers and others, so we want to know that it is worth it. The easiest way to respond is by e-mail; send your feedback to Bret Jensen at jensebr@dshs.wa.gov. If you don't have e-mail, then drop a note to The LINK, PO Box 45480, Olympia, WA 98504-5480.

Questions?

Contact your local Resource & Referral agency to learn about available child care provider training and technical assistance, by phone at 1-800-446-1114 or visit the statewide website at <http://www.childcarenet.org>.

Contact your Licenser or Licensing Supervisor with questions about the MLRs or with license renewal questions. Visit DCCCEL online at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/esa/dcccel/>.

The LINK

The LINK is a semi-annual publication of the Division of Child Care and Early Learning, Economic Services Administration, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), for child care professionals. Send questions, comments, or ideas to the Coordinator, The LINK, DSHS/DCCCEL, P.O. Box 45480, Olympia, WA 98504-5480.

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